

May/ Jun 2024

The specialist international magazine for theme parks and FECs

# InterPark

InterPark.co.uk



**Report**  
**Water Attractions**  
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**On the Cover**  
**Nemesis Reborn,**  
**Alton Towers**

**Project Profile**  
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## Welcome to the May/June issue of InterPark!

Welcome to the May/June issue of InterPark, in which we dive deep into the world of water attractions. With increasing consumer demand for family-friendly water park resorts, developers and investors are looking for new and innovative ways to leverage their popularity. Our features editor, Emma Bilardi spoke to some of the leading suppliers in the sector to find out how operators stay ahead of the curve and offer superior guest experiences. Turn to page 28 to read the full report.

Elsewhere in this issue, David Whitworth takes a closer look at the latest attraction to join Cadbury World in the UK. Operated by Merlin Entertainment, the new trackless interactive indoor dark ride, Cadbury Chocolate Quest takes guests on a mission to collect delicious ingredients, all needed to make a bar of Dairy Milk. A joint venture with Alterface, read more on page 41

As always, we have our regular column contributions from Dennis Spiegel and ADIPS, Open to Question featuring Laurence Beckers of Alterface, and we bring you the latest operator and manufacturer news from around the world through our news pages. Speaking of which, you may have noticed our front cover features the iconic Nemesis Reborn at Alton Towers, one of the most recognisable rides in the world reimaged after 17 months of restoration work! Read the full story on page 6.

*B Whitaker*

Beth Whitaker Editor



## May and June 2024

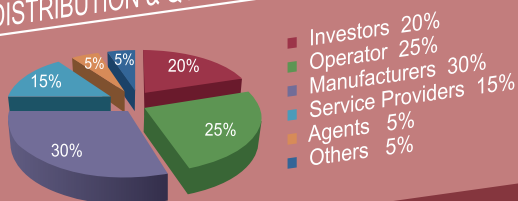
- 5 EUROPE NEWS**
- 10 AMERICAS NEWS**
- 14 ASIA NEWS**
- 18 CHINA NEWS**
- 20 MIDDLE EAST NEWS**
- 22 WATER PARK NEWS**
- 24 SHOW REPORT**  
China Attractions Expo 2024
- 28 FEATURE**  
Water Park Attractions
- 37 COMMENT - ADIPS**  
Audits programme launched
- 38 OPEN TO QUESTION**  
Laurence Beckers, Creative Director
- 41 PROJECT PROFILE**  
Cadbury Chocolate Quest
- 44 COMMENT -**  
Dennis Spiegel shares his thoughts

# 遊樂界 ASIA ATTRACTIONS



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# Europe News

The latest news and announcements

## 1 GRÖNA LUND TO CREATE NEW FAIRGROUNDS PAVILION



**Gröna Lund** has submitted its first building permit applications for a Fairgrounds pavilion at the attractions park.

“Our vision is to merge the past with the future and breathe life into the spirit of innovation and optimism that characterised the end of the 19th century,” says Gröna Lund. “We aim to create a fair for all ages, where joy and futuristic faith permeate every corner.”

Christer Fogelmarck, CEO of Parks and Resorts, gave further details to the planned pavilion: “Gröna Lund's new area will draw inspiration from bygone times and specifically the Stockholm World Fair exhibition that took place in the same place in 1897.

“The historical connection will characterise the architecture, but we also want to focus on the positive spirit and inventiveness that the era was characterised by. Our vision is for the area to become an oasis of experiences, entertainment, food and magical environments. We want to create a place where all guests can feel joy and faith in the future, something we need now more than ever.”

The Stockholm World Fair exhibition harks back to an era where technological innovations included the automobile, the milk separator, electric lighting and moving pictures as well as industrially produced foods such as hot dogs and ice cream. Its success heralded Stockholm and Sweden's biggest exhibition in its history with 1.5 million people coming to the fair.

Fast forward to now and Gröna Lund will welcome visitors once again to this illustrious entertainment pavilion, this time with a compact layout featuring roller coasters, other attractions such as a monorail, an expanded boardwalk featuring restaurant offerings and architecture faithful to the area. According to artist impressions, a new roller coaster ride adorned with a golden track and various inversion and diving will be created as well as housing a grandiose fountain, landscaping featuring trees and elegant plazas making for a beautifully themed immersive area.



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# Europe News

The latest news and announcements

## 2 THE REBIRTH OF NEMESIS REBORN



John Wardley (creator)

A fabled attraction for its entertaining ride and extraordinary immersive storytelling, **Nemesis at Alton Towers**, UK is back after a 17-month restoration process. And the ride is back with a vengeance, reborn as **Nemesis Reborn**.

Essential maintenance on all of its 716-metre-long (2349ft) track has taken place to bring the ride hurtling into modern day use. A specialist team of engineers, including workers on the original construction of Nemesis, have brought the ride back to life.

The entire 250-tonne track - all 53 pieces - have been replaced piece by piece, taking months of workmanship. The track has been shipped all the way from Ohio in the US to the Staffordshire theme park; with 1400 working days spent refitting Nemesis from a team of 5000 construction workers and 750 tradespeople around the world.

Fans of the original ride have been able to watch the Nemesis reborn from a specially erected viewing platform where a maximum of 30 people at any time have been able to witness the reconstruction. During its original chapter, Nemesis travelled an astonishing 800,000 miles, equivalent to circling the world 32.2 times, carrying more than 52 million people.

With an original investment of £10m, Nemesis was the brainchild of leading roller coaster designer, John Wardley allied to Swiss manufacturers Bolliger & Mabillard. Back in 1994, the dangling attraction was Europe's first inverted roller coaster. Wardley reflects fondly on the rebuild and describes the construction challenges both past and present: "It is so exciting to see what you have created actually becoming a piece of entertainment, a piece of excitement. It took around two years to build the original Nemesis. First of all, we had to find the best engineering company in the world to build an



inverted roller coaster that went upside down. No one had ever done it before. We are going to do something different, something special for Alton Towers and we were not going to go up; we were going to go down so we dug a dirty great big hole. Everyone said you are crazy spending all this money on digging a hole and look what we have got!

"Thirty years later, it is still reckoned to be one of the most exciting rides in the world. I never dreamt in my wildest dreams that Nemesis would become the legend that it did. It is so exciting to see Nemesis being reborn. All the wonderful creatives at Merlin Magic Making said 'yes, we can do something very different, very special with the upgrade of Nemesis.' And this is the result. The design and build of Nemesis stands as one of my undisputed career highlights."

The vast and intertwining creative backstory of Nemesis has led to its unrivalled success; a monster that lay dormant until the area was excavated for the ride to be built, leading to Nemesis being let free to frighten folks in Forbidden Valley. Alton Towers' secret security team of 'The Phalanx' were subsequently deployed to 'capture the creature.' After years of causing chaos, Nemesis would be 'seized' and closed by The Phalanx on 6 November, 2022 due to 'carrying out investigations into the beast's behaviour ahead of reopening in 2024.'

Fast forward to this year and the final clue of the returning Nemesis arrived in late February in the shape of a huge orange eye appearing at Cannock Chase - located less than 30 miles from Alton Towers and a place known for mysterious activities in which the Ministry of Defence has investigated dozens of reports of unexplained goings on and strange lights in the area.

This immersive storytelling from its inception to rebirth has captured the imagination and attention of thrill seekers worldwide - more than half a million fans have tuned in to Alton Towers' on-board footage of its reconstruction on social media.

Nemesis is one of the world's most beloved roller coaster rides throughout its 30 year history, entertaining millions of riders since its opening in 1994. It is a ride which put Alton Towers firmly on the map and now the park has returned the favour by giving a well-earned makeover to its flagship roller coaster.

The wait was over on 16 March as Nemesis Reborn was let loose and reopened to a frenzied fanbase longing for





its return - visitors travelled from all over to be part of the historic moment this fabled coaster was back on track and giving thrills a plenty to its riders. The opening day saw mass queues, such was the buzz of anticipation and excitement of Nemesis returning. And Alton Towers has done a great job of enhancing the queue line experience to pass the time and keep the anticipation going thanks to further storytelling sets with a nod to the past as well as eye-catching decorations such as a helicopter and a huge red eye of Nemesis. Guests can get some spectacular views around the queue area, especially at night when the lights really create a captivating illuminous setting. One can take in some impressive vantage points of Nemesis Reborn whirling around its track along with its unmistakable whizzing noise – how Nemesis traverses through its smoke section is a sight to be seen.

Nemesis still gives riders a rush racing around at up to 50mph, pulling a 3.5 G-force through its four inversions. Its first drop of 104ft sets the tone for a ride to remember, which, allied to the iconic interwoven tentacles of Nemesis and a reinforced immersive story, make the overall ride experience a benchmark roller coaster.

Bianca Sammut, Divisional Director at Alton Towers Resort, shared her delight of the reinvigorated ride: “Nemesis is incredibly iconic, it is known worldwide and we are so excited for its rebirth. The park has been absolutely buzzing since its reopening, we have got so many fans that have been watching the reconstruction and paying attention to the story we have been telling so we are thrilled it is living up to expectations.

“The original Nemesis set new standards when it was unveiled to an unsuspecting public back in 1994. It is a monumental engineering achievement of its time, it was a smash hit from the outset, creating a worldwide army of dedicated fans throughout its first 30 years.

“And after unveiling Nemesis Reborn to the world, we are equally thrilled to take the wraps off our new VIP package where guests can come face to face with the legendary individuals who have shaped the Nemesis story.”

Nemesis has truly captured the hearts of theme park enthusiasts. And after more than a year away, fright time has returned to the Forbidden Valley. Riders can once again sit back and ride the fearsome creature that is the reincarnation of Nemesis with Nemesis Reborn.



(Images of the original Nemesis from 1994 are copyrighted with Paul Burton from European Coaster Club, requested by Alton Towers PR)



# Europe News

The latest news and announcements

## 2 ATTRACTIONS.IO PRESENTS NEW 'INDOOR MAPPING' TOOL

**Attractions.io** has presented its new indoor, multi-level mapping system designed to assist entertainment venues with its tourism planning.

Attractions.io develops mobile technology that helps operators in the experience economy unlock the full potential of every visit. Its latest feature for guest experience provides smooth navigation for indoor and outdoor attractions with on-site buildings; Attractions.io announced it is expanding its navigation capabilities even further with Indoor Mapping, a new navigational tool to map complex inside spaces.

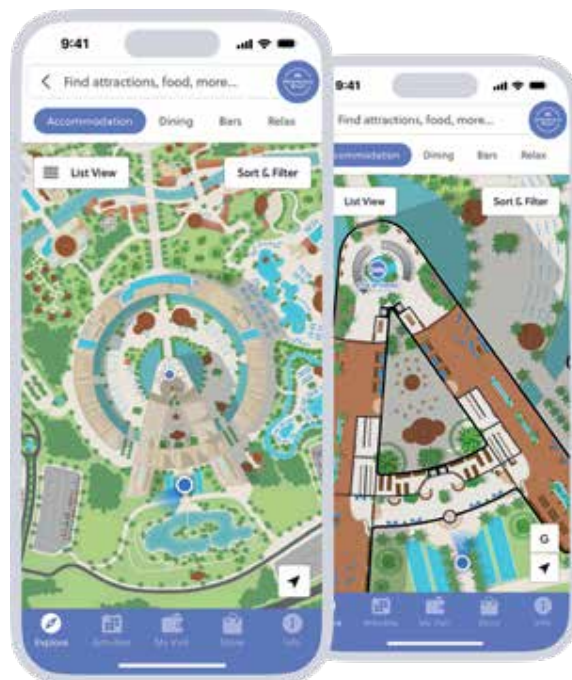
"Mapping indoor attractions is notoriously difficult. GPS positioning can be unreliable, and other technical solutions, such as RFID and triangulation methods, are still in the works," explained a spokesperson for Attractions.io.

"After interviewing staff from indoor attractions such as aquariums and museums, it became clear that the cultural sector faces challenges with guests getting lost and having difficulty locating their preferred exhibits or activities. Even at outdoor attractions, guests tend to lose navigation features when they head into a building, which is an issue for zoos with insectariums or aquariums, or even just navigating the hotel at theme parks.

"With Attractions.io's new indoor mapping feature, operators can add multiple terrain levels to create interactive maps of multi-level on-site buildings, whether there's one floor or 20+ floors."

Using point-to-point wayfinding, guests can get directions to and from anywhere on site. For example, they might be in the cafe at lunchtime and want to plan their route to make the most of their afternoon. Guests can also opt to avoid uneven terrain, such as stairs, if accessibility is a concern. Peter O'Dare, VP of Products at Attractions.io, expanded in further detail the new tool: "Traditional navigation tools often fall short in complex, multi-level spaces, leaving guests and operators in need of a solution that's more reliable and connected. So that's precisely what we aimed to address with our new Indoor, multi-level maps.

"Our commitment at Attractions.io has always been to connect the whole guest journey, and the launch of Indoor Mapping is a prime example of us delivering on this. It's about more than helping guests find their way; it's about creating a connected, memorable, and effortless experience for every visitor. We're excited to see how our partners leverage this new tool to further enrich their guests' visits.



"Indoor mapping is available in our MapLayr SDK and in our mobile app platform, for cultural attractions and resorts that want to offer guests a comprehensive service that includes access to tickets, photos, food ordering, and day planning all in one place."

For outdoor attractions with on-site buildings, guests using the map can seamlessly transition from outdoor to indoor spaces. As they move close to a building with Indoor Mapping enabled (or hovering over one inside the map), the indoor map will reveal itself. They can then choose wayfinding routes in exactly the same fashion as they would outdoors by interacting with specific points of interest.

As with all Attractions.io's maps and wayfinding solutions, guests still get a sleek hand-illustrated map tailored to the attraction's branding and colour scheme. They can also utilise a full range of map effects, like dynamic lighting and animations, to bring their experience to life.

"These new features work and build on the other enhancements we've made to the maps over the last 12 months," added Peter O'Dare. "This includes our unique dynamic night mode and texture effects that are now available to all customers."

Attractions.io built its mapping engine over a decade ago to provide a solution on the market that did what they wanted to do. Since then, its mobile app platform, complete with sleek designed digital maps and interactive wayfinding, has been adopted by some of the world's leading theme park groups, including Merlin Entertainments and Cedar Fair, as well as top zoos, resorts, and cultural attractions.

Its mobile app platform and SDKs provide globally renowned experiences like Legoland, San Diego Zoo and the Cedar Fair with the tools and data they need to unlock the full potential of every visit.

Navigation and wayfinding are a critical part of the guest experience, and a fully branded, intuitive digital map heightens immersion while busting friction points across the guest journey, all courtesy of Attractions.io.





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# America News

The latest news and announcements

## 1 MORGAN'S WONDERLAND OPENS NEW ATTRACTIONS



**Morgan's Wonderland** is enjoying its largest expansion to date this season with a selection of new rides and attractions. The San Antonio theme park, which provides full accessibility to people with disabilities, has welcomed a quartet of experiences to its attraction's menu as part of a significant \$5.1m investment.

One of the park's new attractions is Rocket's Sky Flight Adventure, a zip line that can be accommodated for riders in wheelchairs and who need respiratory equipment. Additional restraints are also provided for riders with poor head and upper-body control. Rocket's Sky Flight Adventure is named after one of the superhero mascots comprising the park's Wonder Squad. Morgan's Wonderland states that a manufacturer from Utah installed the first-of-its-kind, four-seater zip line that accommodates riders with disabilities and special needs. This same company created the first-of-its-kind two-seater zip line at Morgan's Camp. In what is a new iteration of the zip ride, a pair of riders sits back-to-back in the carriage that allows for two different experiences on one zip line.

Meanwhile, Jette's Wonder Bikes is a wheelchair-accessible ride decorated with glider-style cars that riders can control using pedals to go up and down. The bikes are adorned with butterfly-themed features and are named after another mascot that is in keeping with the park's butterfly theme of enabling everyone, especially those with special needs, to soar to new heights of enjoyment. "The wheelchair-accessible Jette's Wonder Bikes ride features six hang-glider-style cars that gently fly in a circular pattern. Each is equipped with pedals that riders can use to make the cars swoop up and down. Guests unable to access the pedals can use hand cranks instead," explains a park spokesperson.

Another new attraction is a 4D cinema offering riders in wheelchairs a roller-coaster experience called Mars Coaster, projected by a video screen with motion effects. Located in Sensory Village, the cinema provides a platform with unique features necessary for rides in wheelchairs to have the same roller coaster-type experience as typical rides.

Morgan's Wonderland explains that the 4D Cinema features electric actuators that deliver smooth and accurate motion effects, a custom video screen size for guests of all abilities and a motion-disengage option for those who do not wish to experience coaster-like sensations.

The fourth new attraction is a Pirate themed boat cruise, which accommodates 25 passengers of all abilities for a tour of the park's eight-acre catch-and-release fishing lake. Guests will board the covered boat from the newly-constructed pier and dock adjacent to the Pirate Island playscape. All passengers, including guests in wheelchairs, will have a great view of the new zip line crossing directly over the lake.

The expansion is also complemented by an inclusive sports field, community centre, and a salon. In all, Morgan Wonderland offers 25 rides, attractions and experiences.

"We worked closely with the ride manufacturers to make sure our new additions are in sync with the rest of our ultra-accessible, fully-inclusive park," said Richard Pretlow, president of Morgan's Wonderland. "We're excited about these new elements and updates to an already incredible park that's known around the globe."

Morgan's Wonderland is the brainchild of Gordon Hartman, a former home builder from San Antonio. It was during a family holiday with his disabled daughter Morgan, that his idea of creating an all-inclusive theme park was sparked. At the hotel swimming pool, Morgan wanted to play with some children who were playing with a ball. Sadly, they refused and left. "I'll never forget the look of anguish and dismay on Morgan's face, so I decided there had to be a way to bridge the gap of misunderstanding about people with special needs," explained Hartman. "That incident was the tipping point for Morgan's Wonderland and ultimately Morgan's Inspiration Island."

Fast forward five years and on 3 March, 2010, Morgan's Wonderland was born at a star-studded opening ceremony led by special guests NBA legend David Robinson and actress Eva Longoria.

Since its opening 14 years ago, Morgan's Wonderland has welcomed almost four million visitors from across the US and over 120 countries. And this year promises to be its biggest yet thanks to its significant attraction additions. "Since the end of October, we've been busy adding new attractions and refreshing the park for the enjoyment of our guests from near and far," says Hartman. "This constitutes the largest expansion in our history that began in spring 2010."

The success of Morgan's Wonderland has led to the opening of Morgan's Inspiration Island, a fully-accessible water park, and Morgan's Wonderland Camp, a fully-accessible camp, all of which can be found in San Antonio.

Morgan's Wonderland has all the attractions and experiences of a usual theme park. However, at Morgan's, there's no loud noises nor long queuing areas and it is free for people with a disability. Every ride at the park is fully accessible for all guests, creating a safe and fun haven to savour a real wonderland.



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# America News

The latest news and announcements

## 2 DISNEY GIVES FIRST GLIMPSE INTO LIGHTHOUSE POINT ISLAND EXPERIENCE



Disney has given a first glimpse into Lighthouse Point, its new private Bahamian destination.

**Lookout Cay** at Lighthouse Point will open its island to visitors in June and will offer attractions that include family beaches and interactive water play areas for kids to adult-only beaches and hiking trails. Images show Mabrika Cove Cabanas, designed by a local Bahamian artist and will be available for families to rent during a day out at the beach. Lighthouse Point can be found on the island of Eleuthera and will be Disney's second private destination in the Bahamas - the first being Castaway Cay, which opened in 1998.



Eleuthera is located about 73 miles east of Nassau and the only way to visit the destination is on board the Disney Cruise Line.

Lighthouse Point is set to premier for guests on 7 June thanks to a three-night preview cruise onboard Disney Magic, the cruise line's first ship. The cruise will set sail from Fort Lauderdale in Florida on 6 June before heading back three days later.

## 3 GLENWOOD CAVERN CELEBRATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY

**Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park** is lining up a variety of festivities in honour of its 25th anniversary.

America's only mountaintop theme park has dramatically changed since its inception in 1999. But you have to go back to 1896 for the story to really begin. It was then that the Fairy Caves were opened to the public by Charles Darrow, who installed one of the first cave systems illuminated by electric lighting.

Back to the turn of the millennium when Jeanne and Steve Beckley reopened the site as Glenwood Caverns transforming it into the adventure park it is today. "We never could have imagined how Glenwood Caverns and the Adventure Park would have grown over the past 25 years," Steve Beckley said. "It's been amazing to build the only mountaintop theme park in America and we are excited to celebrate this milestone with our treasured guests."



Two of the centrepiece attractions of Glenwood Caverns are the Cliffhanger roller coaster, which stands at 7,160ft and perched 50ft tall, giving riders spectacular views, as well as Defiance, the steepest free-fall roller coaster in the western United States (102.3°) and a viral hit on social media.

To acknowledge its 25th anniversary, Glenwood Caverns has many events in the offing including a grand anniversary party and a free gondola ride offer.



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# Asia News

The latest news and announcements

## 1 NINJAGO THE RIDE HEADING FOR LEGOLAND KOREA RESORT



**Legoland Korea Resort** will be the latest home of the renowned Ninjago attraction.

Merlin Entertainments, the parent company of the Lego themed park, has confirmed the news and will contribute 20 billion WON (£11.8m) towards the ride and infrastructure in general.

“Ninjago The Ride is the most popular line of Lego in South Korea and we are preparing to introduce a thrilling Ninjago ride for 2025,” confirmed Lee Soon-kyu, divisional director of Legoland Korea Resort.



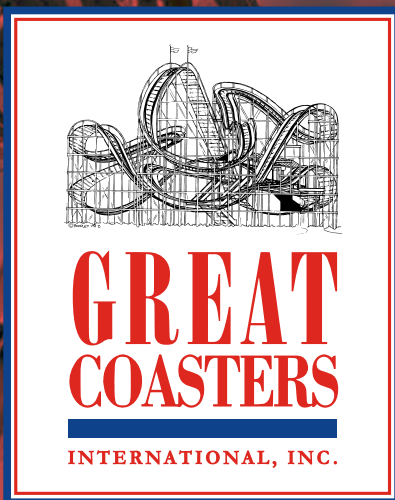
The new attraction is a production of Triotech, a leader in the media-based ride industry. Its Ninjago The Ride is a unique interactive ride featuring its innovative hand gesture technology, Maestro. The interactive ride will cover 2,644 sqm of land and breathe fresh life and opportunity into the Korean venue.

“It’s a real pleasure to see Ninjago the Ride being deployed all over the world,” said Ernest Yale, President and CEO of Triotech. “Now visitors to Legoland Korea will be enjoying it too! The ride is very family friendly and typically gets a top satisfaction rating from park guests. We often see both children and their parents riding again and again to get a higher score!”

Legoland Korea will be the eighth Ninjago ride at a Legoland theme park in the world after its successful openings in Legoland Florida, Legoland Billund and Legoland Windsor. Riders on-board Ninjago The Ride aim to become masters of Spinjitzu and utilise ninja skills to battle through ice, wind and fire scenes through an exciting immersive 4D interactive family ride. The story of Ninjago the Ride depicts the lives of Kai, Nya, Cole, Zane and Jay as they battle against snake tribes, skeleton ghosts and the King of the Skulkuns before facing the giant serpent of The Great Devourer ..... Cont over/







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# Asia News

The latest news and announcements

Ninjago immerses riders in various scenes as they travel along a journey to remember. The experience is made better as riders can interact without a device in their hand. Guests only move their arms or hands to throw fireballs, lightning, ice, and shock waves to defeat villains. It is very intuitive and all they must do is aim with their hands. The ride functions through cutting edge detection motion sensors picked up by the movement of the riders' hands in real time.

The experience will give the first global theme park in South Korea a huge tourism boost. Moreover, Legoland Korea Resort prides itself in its uniqueness - striving to differentiate itself from the country's other amusement parks and other Legoland venues around the world.

Last year it became the first in the franchise to stay open at night to accommodate the lifestyle of Korean children with the resort remaining open until 9pm on Fridays and weekends from spring to autumn. Legoland Korea is the 10th in the world and the biggest in Asia. The resort covers an area of 280,000sqm and features over 40 rides in seven zones with different Lego themes. Meanwhile, its accommodation venue hosts 154 Lego-themed rooms and suites.



## 2 WORLD'S FIRST GHOSTBUSTERS BUMPER CAR RIDE IN PATTAYA

In celebration of the release of the Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire film, the world's first Ghostbusters bumper car ride is now open at Columbia Pictures Aquaverse in **Pattaya**, Thailand.

The bumper car ride experience provides realistic ghost holograms and cutting-edge effects. Driving in uniquely designed cars echoing the film's characters and themes, riders will recreate movie moments through special projection mapping that transforms the ride with dynamic scenes from Ghostbusters, such as icy landscapes and ghost realms. Riders can experience the thrill of navigating through an environment that comes alive in the dark, adding a mysterious and exciting layer to their adventure. To complement the experience, Dolby Atmos Surround Sound provides a 360° immersive audio experience using film soundtracks and environmental cues.

The Ghostbusters Bumper Car ride enhances the buzz around the film, amplifying its excitement and complementing the film's narrative so fans can engage with their favourite characters and storylines beyond the screen in a new and unique way.



Columbia Pictures Aquaverse is the world's first Columbia Pictures theme and water park. It is located 20 minutes south of Pattaya in the Bang Saray area, home to 5-star beach resorts, seafood restaurants, and tourist attractions.



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# China News

The latest news and announcements

## 1 WORLD'S LARGEST PEPPA PIG THEME PARK ANNOUNCED

**Peppa Pig** is set to be bigger than ever as Shanghai will be the home of the world's largest stand-alone Peppa Pig outdoor theme park.

With an investment of over 2.4 billion Chinese Yuan (£309m) Max-Matching Entertainments has agreed terms as the strategic long-term local partner to construct the theme park, which is scheduled to open in 2027. It will take over 48 acres of Shanghai's Changxing Island.

Cai Xiaofei, deputy director of Changxing Island's Administrative Committee, says Peppa's park will be the first branded entertainment offering on the island. "The Peppa Pig outdoor theme park will further enhance Shanghai as a global tourism destination and propel its economy. The greater footfall will lead to more exposure for Changxing island, Chongming, Shanghai and benefit overall infrastructure and connectivity. We believe this theme park can serve as a flagship attraction for the island, helping to establish its own unique brand identity and will have a positive long-term effect to promote the island's reputation.

Meanwhile, Matt Proulx, Senior Vice President, Global Experiences, Partnerships and Music at Hasbro, explained: "Construction of the Peppa Pig outdoor theme park marks

## 1 LOTTE GROUP CLOSES THEME PARK DEAL

**Lotte Group** has clinched a deal to distribute an entire theme park project to a Chinese enterprise located in Shenyang. It has been confirmed that Lotte Group has agreed to pass on its China-based company Lotte Glory Properties Shenyang in a deal reportedly worth 450 billion Won (£261m). The project, known as Lotte Town, includes a theme park, a residential area, a department store and a cinema.

The news coincides with an upward turn for the Korean entertainment group, with recent economic and visitor numbers heralding a brighter future. Indeed, figures confirm that levels are near to pre-pandemic, posting their highest ever profits for the year 2023 - Lotte World, run by Lotte Hotel and one of South Korea's largest theme parks, earned 45.4 billion Won (£26m) in operating profit, a 9.3% increase on-year. The increased figures are due to an exponential rise in visitor numbers and increased entry tickets. For further context, back in 2020, guest numbers at Lotte World diminished considerably from 5.78 million in 2019 to 1.55 million. It posted an operating loss of over 100 billion Won



a significant milestone for Hasbro in China and a natural evolution for the Peppa Pig brand, reflecting the scale of opportunity in the country and our commitment to developing our business with the support of strategic licensing partner Max-Matching Entertainments in China.

"We will continue to work closely together to develop more projects in China, including bringing Peppa Pig outdoor theme parks and memorable live experiences to more cities for Chinese children and families to enjoy."

Owen Zhao, President of Max-Matching Entertainments, revealed that the new Peppa Pig theme park will boast innovative features, new themed areas, rides, an immersive show, and a themed hotel specifically designed for the China market.

Since it first aired in China in 2015 Peppa Pig has over 60 billion views along with a wide range of products available across major Chinese retailers.



(£57.8m) in 2020. To combat losses, Lotte World raised its ticket price to 62,000 Won (£36) in 2022 from 59,000 Won (£34) in 2021. And in 2023, visitor numbers for the park soared to 90% pre-pandemic levels thanks to an increase in foreign visitors. In the first quarter of this year, attendance at Lotte World rose 25%, compared to the year-earlier period.

The business metrics demonstrate that Lotte Group continues to expand and grow, namely through strategic alliances with coveted intellectual property (IP) of digital comics and forging partnerships with entertainment content developers as the group strives to sow the seeds of success.





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# Middle East News

The latest news and announcements

## 1 WORLD'S FIRST DRAGON BALL THEME PARK COMING TO SAUDI ARABIA

The world's first theme park based on the worldwide hit **Dragon Ball** franchise is to be constructed in Saudi Arabia. The park will bring to life the martial artist Goku and friends made famous through the critically-acclaimed comics, television shows, movies and video games.

Qiddiya Investment Company will oversee the build of the enormous theme park, which will be located in the up-and-coming entertainment and tourism hub of Qiddiya nearby Riyadh - a 500,000-metre (310,000sq mile) city more than double the size of Florida's Disney World.

The Dragon Ball theme park will sprawl across seven themed areas which signify the seven dragon balls. The storytelling ensures that Kame House, Capsule Corporation, and Beerus' Planet will all find their rightful home in the world of Dragon Ball.

At the core of the story will be Son Goku, the young boy with supernatural martial arts powers who is on a quest to collect seven magical orbs that elicit a wish-granting dragon.

The theme park will feature five cutting-edge rides as part of a thrilling menu served up with up to 30 attractions. Additionally, there will be restaurants and an accommodation venue enabling fans of the series to immerse themselves further in Dragon Ball fandom.

"On a scale never imagined before, the park's interactive and explorable themed experiences will allow you to live the adventures at the heart of the action, experiencing the journey from the first Dragon Ball series to the latest Dragon Ball Super," says a park spokesperson.

The announcement comes after Qiddiya entered into a long-term strategic partnership with Toei Animation, Japan's leading animation company and original animators of Dragon Ball. The partnership aims to preserve and elevate the franchise, with a shared vision to fulfil visitor's dreams of bringing Dragon Ball to the real world and will pave the way for Qiddiya and Toei Animation to broaden their existing collaboration.

Commenting on the launch, Abdullah Aldawood, Managing Director of Qiddiya Investment Company said: "We are pleased to be partnering with Toei Animation, bringing their rich legacy of pioneering contributions to the anime industry

to Qiddiya City. Dragon Ball theme park is a celebration of the diverse and vibrant world of anime, offering a unique blend of thrills, family-friendly attractions, and immersive entertainment for everyone.

"This announcement only marks the beginning of many promising projects. The theme park embraces the City's power of play philosophy, and solidifies our commitment to provide world-class entertainment, as a global leader in groundbreaking and diverse attractions."

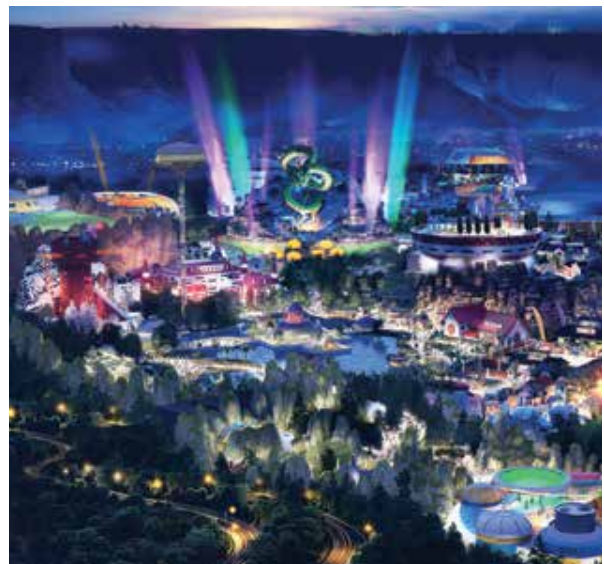
Katsuhiro Takagi, President of Toei Animation, added: "Our collaboration with Qiddiya marks a key milestone, offering fans a one-of-a-kind opportunity to experience the epic adventures of Dragon Ball first-hand in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The reveal of the world's only Dragon Ball theme park is a testament to the timeless legacy of the Dragon Ball franchise."

Dragon Ball originated in 1984 as a serial, growing to become one of the best-selling manga series in history, selling 260 million copies worldwide. It was first serialised in Japan's Weekly Shonen Jump comic magazine before being adapted into movies, video games and television shows distributed in more than 80 countries.

Manga and anime are growing ever popular in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia - according to Saudi anime production and distribution company Manga Productions, there are an estimated 13 million fans of the Japanese genre and around 85 million across the Arab world.

The news of this landmark Dragon Ball announcement at this time is poignant with the death of its beloved creator Akira Toriyama in March. "The role of my manga is to be a work of entertainment through and through," said Toriyama during an interview in 2013. "I dare say I don't care even if (my works) have left nothing behind, as long as they have entertained their readers."

Fittingly, the new Dragon Ball theme park will further acknowledge his legacy of creating a series which has and continues to bring joy to many millions of devoted fans around the world.





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# Waterparks News

The latest news and announcements

## 1 FIRST BANGLADESH WATER PARK INSTALLED BY WHITEWATER

A haven of serenity awaits guests at Mana Bay Water Park, Bangladesh's first water park. Mana Bay provides an exciting lineup of attractions featuring 17 water slides and four thrilling water rides. Guests can also change gears and adopt a calmer approach thanks to a luxury spa service provided by skilled Thai professionals.

Sasheen Akbani, the visionary behind Mana Bay, explains further: "We built Mana Bay as a sanctuary where every guest can relax, rejuvenate, and reignite themselves while having fun. We have formed key partnerships in building and operating the park so guests always feel safe and secure while having a good time."



## 2 URBAN BLUE UNDER DEVELOPMENT IN BOCHUM

Work is well underway for a new leisure facility called **Urban Blue** to be based in Bochum, Germany.

The German tourism destination is geared up for all the family housing an indoor swimming pool, a range of sporting activities and gourmet cuisines. Urban Blue will feature various aquatic activities with an indoor swimming pool, rafting adventure, mud playground, water playground, paddling pools, water cannons and a rock slide – all ideal for cooling off guests in the warmer temperatures. Sport will be a focal point with Urban Blue providing guests the opportunity to keep fit thanks to a beach football area, basketball court, boules, running track and a scenic trail, which will take in much of the facility. Urban Blue will also cater for guests to unwind thanks to a tranquil beach area filled with sand to create a beach feeling in the middle of the Ruhr area, according to Urban Blue. On top of that, there will be a nature and relaxation area with an organic pond with a plant filter that merges into an adventure and play stream.

"We will have offers for all age groups and families in Langendreer," commented a spokesperson for Urban Blue. "Children and especially small children should be introduced

WhiteWater oversaw the development of the water park, installing a host of signature attractions from its diverse portfolio including a 30-metre (99ft) wave pool, AquaSplash, kids' slides, RainFortress 5, FlowRider Double surfing experience, Open Flume, Open & Enclosed, Rattler, Super Bowl, Flatline Loop, AquaDrop, Whizzard and Boomerango.

The park is divided into themed zones. At Enchanted Waters, guests can 'surrender to serenity' as they meander along the Lazy River. Over at Whirlpool Wonder is a cool wave pool, while Blissful Bay offers up natural surroundings leading to a state of bliss and peacefulness. And Hydro Groove provides twists and turns as Mana Bay offers a diverse range of aquatic activities.

The water park is ably assisted with an unwinding spa experience with rejuvenating treatments, massages, and serene ambiance. Guests can relax at one of many Cabanas before enjoying a fine gastronomic choice thanks to the culinary expertise of Brazilian Head Chef, Kaique Chericone Lima.

Mana Bay covers 51,700sqm in all and is situated one-and-a-half-hours away from Dhaka, Bangladesh.



to the element of water in a playful way in order to lose their fear of water but also to learn respect for water. Urban Blue inspires with all its options for cool water and connects generations. From the swimming pool to various sports and play options to the dining and relaxation area, everyone can look forward to a unique leisure offering in the east of Bochum."

In a nutshell, guests at Urban Blue will enjoy a nourishing stay full of "play, climb, run around, but also relax and unwind," as described by the facility.

Urban Blue is set to be a holistic home from home and an ideal tourism getaway.







The art of aquatic play



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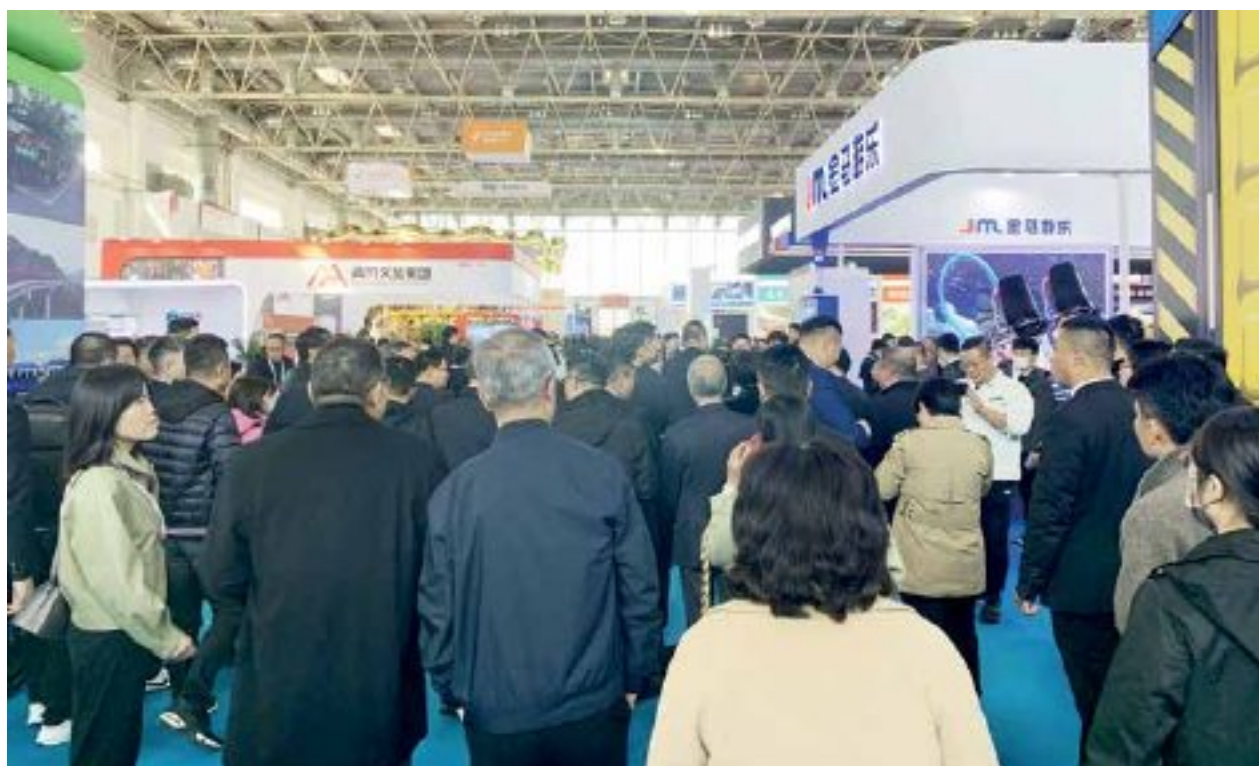
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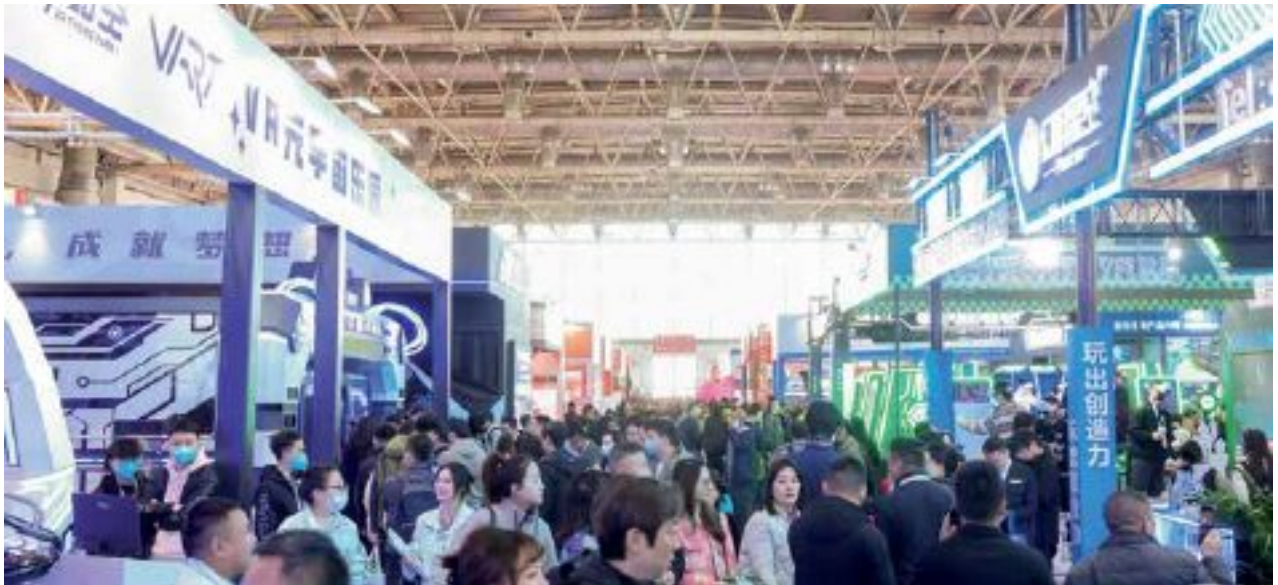


# China Attractions Expo 2024

Concludes in Beijing, Continuing Success and Future Opportunities







The China Attractions Expo 2024, a pivotal event for the global cultural and tourism sectors, took place at the China International Exhibition Centre (Shunyi Pavilion) from March 20th to 22nd. This year's expo drew over 600 exhibitors including cultural and tourism service providers and amusement equipment manufacturers, showcasing their latest innovations and projects.

The exhibition highlighted a diverse range of products such as amusement, digital, and electronic entertainment equipment, sports, edutainment, cultural creativity, and service output solutions. Additionally, it covered information management, traffic equipment, creative landscape design, performing arts, and commercial consumer products.

Key trends observed at the expo included a rising demand for small and medium-sized amusement equipment, family-oriented attractions, and iconic landmark installations. Customization has become increasingly standard in the industry, driven by technological advancements and expanding application scenarios.

A notable topic at the expo was the shift towards internationalization, exhibitors discussed the saturation

of the domestic market and the opportunities available in regions like the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

The expo also featured several specialized forums addressing current industry challenges such as security, digital technology, entertainment IPs, urban park management, and more. These forums provided valuable insights, enabling participants to tap into new trends, resources, and markets, facilitating effective connections between supply and demand.

The China Attractions Expo, organized by CAAPA, has successfully completed its 39th edition, establishing a vast industry ecosystem with strong market dynamics. This event has become a critical platform for fostering new and high-quality productivity in recreation and tourism, enhancing the international trade and exchange within the industry.

For those interested in participating in CAE Beijing 2025, our overseas agency representative, Lily from L&A International Ltd, is ready to assist with booth reservations and show preparations. You can contact Lily at [lily@leisureandattractions.com](mailto:lily@leisureandattractions.com) for more details and support.

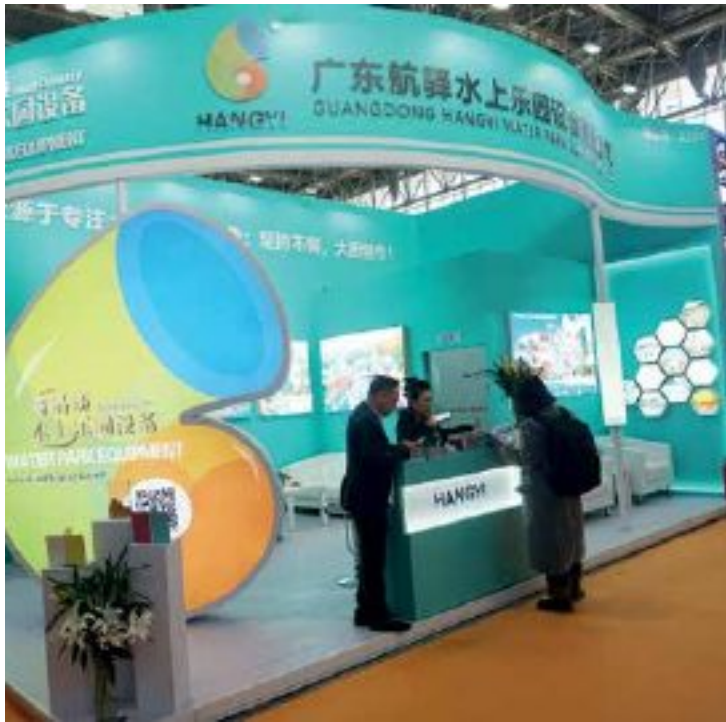


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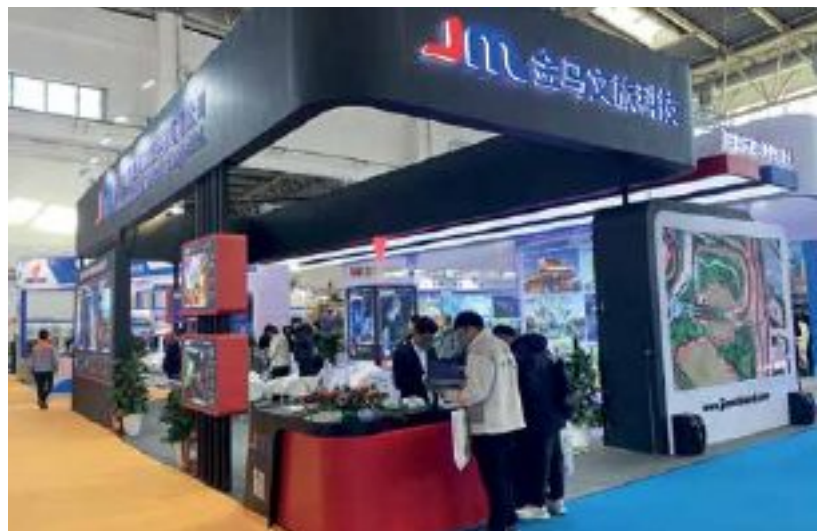
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Simtec Systems



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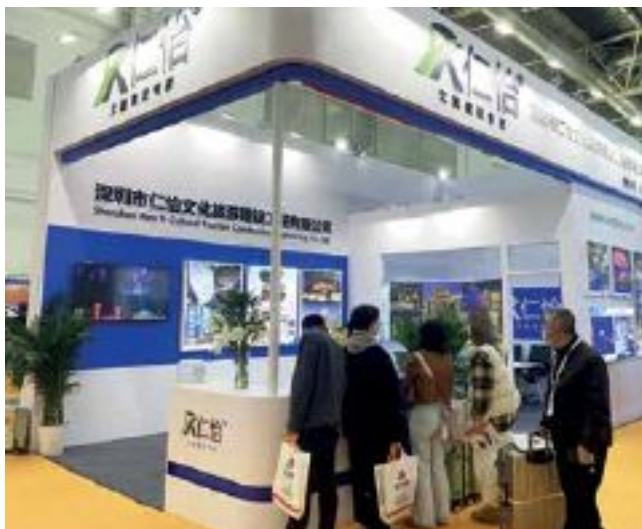


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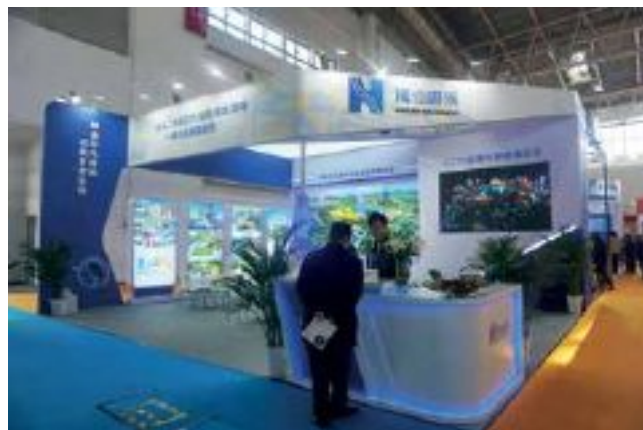


Dinosaur Land Group





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# Water Play Attractions

With increasing consumer demand for family-friendly water park resorts, developers, and investors are looking for new and innovative ways to leverage their popularity.

While the pandemic slowed the demand and growth of the water park industry, by 2022 U.S. and Canadian water parks alone achieved revenues of over \$8.5 bn. The industry has continued to turn profits globally ever since, but carving out a competitive advantage in this industry can be tough. The standard model of pools with slides just doesn't cut it any more. Indoor and outdoor water parks are becoming more like amusement parks with a variety of ride experiences, retail, hospitality, and even lodgings on offer.

So the question is, how do operators stay ahead of the curve and offer superior guest experiences, while anticipating the industry's next big trend?

InterPark's **Emma Bilardi** spoke to some of the leading suppliers in the sector to find out.

Jim Dunn, president of **Aquatic Development Group**, believes change is the key, and it is constant.

"Innovation is a fundamental part of the industry. People are always asking for the newest and best technology. Indoor parks are getting much more sophisticated over time as architects, designers, and engineers are becoming more experienced and learning more.

"Systems, rides, and materials are constantly improving, and new things are being introduced every day. The change is constant, and new parks need to keep this in mind, allow for changes and innovations over time to keep relevant to their guests and offer better experiences."

Mitch Petty, Director of Master Planning at **ProSlide** agrees the water park sector is evolving, but through a focus on operational efficiency and technologies that reduce operating costs. "We're seeing further technological innovations designed to improve safety in water parks, including advancements in artificial intelligence and video analytics. For instance – The Ellis





Aquatic Vigilance System (EAVS) is AI that helps save lives, money, and time by providing a complete 360° view of the park. Technologies like EAVS are helping to improve park safety and ensure secure environments for families."

Another area of innovation Petty identifies is a focus on improving guest convenience and increasing per capita spending. "Wearable RFID bracelets and cashless systems allow for easier transactions and increased revenue," he explains. "This technology contributes to a smoother guest experience and promotes higher spending within the parks."

There's no doubt the industry is seeing a significant integration of technology into water park experiences. Technology like custom light and sound elements for slides and rides, as well as the implementation of incentivising consumers and allowing them to customise their experience. In terms of attractions, Dunn is seeing a bigger emphasis on getting more people in unprogrammed water.

"Additionally, we're seeing dynamic pricing and weather insurance being utilised to stabilise revenue streams, alongside the introduction of upscale food and beverage options," he says. "Although classic favourites like chicken fingers and fries are still the prime choice."

Competition in ride offerings has intensified with duals and racing rides, while slide manufacturers are innovating with water coaster attractions and providing scaled-down versions of experiences for younger children.

The industry is also seeing a growing interest in surf wave attractions and standing wave pools, a trend that Dunn attributes to the Olympic Games.

"Surfing is the fastest-growing sport in the world, in part due to its involvement in the Olympic Games and

the media exposure it has received over the last several years," he says. "Guests are looking to experience the sport and the joy of surfing even in regions without access to the ocean. By bringing surfing inland, you break that accessibility barrier, giving more people the opportunity to learn to surf."

"Given the skill-based nature of surfing, the pursuit of improvement delivers an exhilarating rush that fuels a desire to continue honing your skills, which is part of why it has become so popular. In addition to the learn-to-surf aspect, advanced and pro surfers are drawn to inland surf attractions due to their ability to train on a repetitive, consistent wave without the hassle of paddling and waiting for the next wave to come."

The industry is seeing a larger number of standing wave installations, thanks in part to the energetic environments they create, which in turn attracts spectators and drives revenue through nearby food and beverage programs.

"These attractions offer a unique experience, with one or two riders drawing large crowds of spectators," Petty explains. "Theming opportunities create a truly immersive environment for riders and spectating guests. This spectacle factor makes standing wave installations appealing for events, parties, and other social gatherings, further enhancing their revenue potential."

Though popular, larger surf pools are more challenging to develop due to their high capital and operational costs.

"They have lower capacity compared to standing wave attractions. They also appeal to a smaller, more niche audience with a specific skill set," Petty says. "They do, however, provide an opportunity for consistent surfing experiences, especially in regions where access to natural waves is limited."





Ron Lausman, Vice President of Business Development at **WhiteWater** is seeing the trend move towards mixed use developments in areas you wouldn't typically expect. "Things are going vertical fast," he says. "It makes for impressive visuals, experiences, and impressive developments. Vertical is also more efficient from a land use perspective, providing opportunities to introduce parks in more urban areas where land valuations would be much higher and would traditionally not allow for this type of entertainment venue to exist."

"We are also seeing these developed in conjunction with mixed-use developments, where the entertainment value is much higher and providing a greater density of uses is attractive to guests."

Most of the companies InterPark spoke with agreed that mixed-use developments appear to be the norm and far from competing with amusement parks, water parks often complement them.

"Amusement parks thrive in cooler weather and give you an active day moving from one attraction to another. In contrast, water parks allow for setting up camp and relaxing while enjoying aquatic activities without the constant rush." Dunn explains. "Amusement parks and water parks don't compete regarding experience, they complement each other, especially as a combined experience at the same location."

"In the summer, amusement parks may be quieter during the day, while water parks see more visitors. As the day goes on, water parks typically start to empty as you reach the cooler parts of the evening, then amusement parks become more desirable. Additionally, amusement parks have a longer season, so they are not competing with most water parks on the shoulder seasons."

Perry agrees that water parks and amusement parks are part of a synergistic industry, and it works to develop both in tandem.

"We're not necessarily in direct competition with one another. Water parks often accompany amusement parks to enhance the guest experience and extend the time visitors spend at a given property."

"By adding water attractions, these parks diversify their entertainment options and create additional revenue opportunities. In many cases, water parks are part of a larger theme park complex, though they are much less expensive to build compared to full-scale theme parks. This makes them an attractive initial phase for multi-gate park developments. We often see a water park as the first phase of a multi-gate development because the barrier to entry is lower."

"You could argue that because water parks are traditionally easier and cheaper to develop than an equivalent dry park," Lausman explains: "Financially they could be a significant competitor providing a better guest experience and ROI for the developer. In most respects, they can compete but are also complementary if planned in conjunction with a dry park. I believe both would benefit from enhanced attendance if done right."

But how do indoor and outdoor water parks fair against each other? Is one more profitable than the other? How different are the guest profiles?

According to Petty, they differ in five main areas, the first of which is Seasonal operation. "Indoor water parks are typically open year-round, except for brief maintenance closures, where outdoor water parks in the same region close during winter."

"Space and layout is the second concern. Indoor water parks tend to be more compact due to limited space, which influences their layout and operation. As a result, guests may have shorter stays (2-3 hours), whereas outdoor parks, with more space, encourage longer visits (4-5 hours). This naturally affects revenue, with outdoor parks aiming to keep guests longer, indoor parks focus on higher turnover to maximise the number of visitors in a day."

Crowd management, operational costs and ride design are the remaining differences.

"Indoor parks often manage crowd size through timed tickets (morning, afternoon, evening) to ensure a good guest experience. This approach allows for a steady flow of visitors without overcrowding, which impacts revenue positively."







"They typically have higher initial capital costs and operating expenses due to the need for climate control (heating air and water). Space constraints also limit the height and scale of attractions, requiring more complex design and structural systems. And of course there's a more compact ride setup due to space limitations. This requires creative design solutions to deliver enjoyable experiences.

"So to sum things up, outdoor parks, with fewer constraints, can offer larger rides and greater flexibility in design. Indoor parks, however, benefit from longer operating seasons."

Lausman believes the size of the building and control quality can make or break an indoor park. "The limitation for indoor parks is typically the size of the building, the roof height, and the systems for the water park that control quality. All of these components will determine the content of the park, its appeal, and the guest experience. All of these must work in concert to provide the paying guests the best quality recreation experience as possible.

"Indoor parks have many more systems to maintain them, specifically air handling (heating and AC), and these are certainly more complicated to control and maintain. Indoor park maintenance is connected to these systems. If water and air quality is not maintained consistently, it will have a significant impact on the building over time. Chloramines are generated by the park water treatment by oxidising contaminants. If these are not expelled by the air handling system, this can play a significant role in the corrosion of metals contained in the interior."

As pragmatic as Lausman's answer is, he's keen to reiterate that the benefits of indoor parks are plenty. "They have the ability to provide temperature and light, so they're not limited by daylight. Many stand-alone outdoor parks have also added indoor ones to enable extended hours of operation per day, allow for use on rainy days, and prolong the season into winter.

"Indoor parks can actively be run as a second gate for the attraction, allowing for nighttime entertainment like special events, parties, or even transforming the park into a bit of a nightclub. The limitations of being weather dependent is removed by having a roof over the top.

Operators can add revenue to all the entertainment mix if planned and programmed correctly."

The rides in indoor venues tend to be smaller and shorter, designers are trying to maximise space for other uses, so alternative, innovative ideas need to be brought into play. Larger parks have larger rides out of practical necessity, addressing capacity and the need to provide guests with higher levels of experience and thrill value.

Indoor parks certainly have to make more intentional decisions on ride mix. For instance, the two primary crowd attractors in water parks are river and wave experiences. However, due to space constraints, a decision may need to be made about which of these attractions best suit their venue.

So how do these differing values affect both indoor and outdoor guest profiles?

"I think that depends on a lot of different factors," Lausman says. "Content of the park, guest expectations, how full the park is, noise level, the other attractions it contains. Guests are driven by the quality of the experience, and even that can change for hot and cold days. People are drawn in by entertainment value, guest experience, quality, and amenities, but they also want to be comfortable, and these are not static components of the guest experience."

Dunn agrees there are a variety of factors at play. "The guest profile can vary between indoor and outdoor water parks because indoor water parks are often connected to hotels, setting a more premium price point than their outdoor counterpart, which may limit some of the crossovers. However, water park fanatics are often drawn to both because of their diverse settings."

In terms of the global market, the USA and Europe have established water park markets, so fewer new venues are emerging in these regions. However, places like Vietnam, China, and the Middle East are experiencing a boom in water park development due to increasing tourism and economic growth. The Middle East is especially seeing a significant increase in new water park projects, reflecting a shift in the global market.



# Proslide

**Canadian designer** of water rides and water park resorts, ProSlide's new Dubai office is a strategic move to help support this emerging market, offering a dedicated team to the region and its unique requirements. A company with innovation in its DNA, the team recently completed a unique project for Aqualibi, situated in Wavre, Belgium.

The project began as a modest expansion in 2017 but evolved into a large-scale undertaking, with Compagnie des Alpes (CdA) and the Walibi/Aqualibi team aiming to create a world-class indoor water park.

The project's initial expansion plan was on the existing side of the building, and required the removal of existing slides and adapting infrastructure, making it complex and costly.

After revisions, the expansion moved to the front side, providing more space and better sightlines for arriving guests. This change was key to allowing more flexibility in ride design, though it came with its own set of challenges.

Despite moving to a larger space, the footprint was still relatively small, requiring compact designs without compromising safety and ride experience. ProSlide's design philosophy, inspired by the curves, slopes, and turns found in alpine ski racing, played a crucial role in addressing the challenges. The collaboration with the CdA and Walibi/Aqualibi teams allowed ProSlide to create a unique ride mix with innovative technologies and compact designs that retained the company's design principles.

The team, including ride designers, master planners, engineers, project managers, and installation crews,



worked for approximately 20 months to complete the project, delivering a world-class water park experience. Aqualibi's ride selection is impressive, featuring several world and European firsts. The mix includes high-thrill and family-friendly rides, appealing to a wide range of guests. Notable installations include the Hybrid TornadoWAVE 60 and FlyingSAUCER 30 - an outdoor ride for an indoor water park.

A duelling RocketBLAST Water Coaster, which is the first of its kind for an indoor water park.

The Hybrid Explosion Element - CannonBOWL 40 and the two-lane RallyRACER - A family adventure experience, designed for shared interactivity.

The rides were designed to offer a mix of thrill and adventure, with duelling elements in both the coaster and the RallyRACER, enhancing the interactive experience.

# Hafema

**Hafema was** founded in 1990 as a mechanical engineering company, and since 2004 has specialised in water rides. Hafema operates internationally as a global supplier of water rides. Hafema has supplied water rides in 20 theme parks across Germany, Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and the USA.

The company recently completed a project at Okavango River in the Jaderpark, Germany.

A new Flume Ride with the newest generation Ride Control System was designed to fit the demands of the Jaderpark and replace an old, existing flume ride. The flume ride is family friendly, exactly the main demographic at Jaderpark.

The Hafema flume ride is available in heights between three and 15-metres with four to eight-person boats, providing high capacity rides with variable boat fleets. Different transport systems are also available, such as tire drives or chain lifts. The water flow system is optimised to allow for minimum energy consumption.



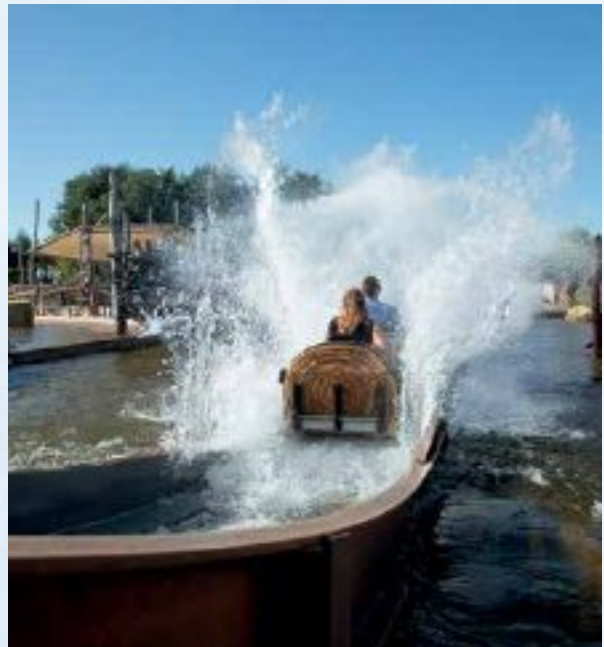


Each flume ride ensures minimised energy and operating costs due to its detailed hydraulic design. It features a semi-automatic station system with stop and go for loading and unloading and a safe and easy embark from a dry platform.

Boat distances and velocities can be selected within a wide range and thanks to its automatic mode minimal personnel are required to operate the ride.

The theming of this ride was vital, Jaderpark knew exactly what they wanted - an African village scene - and so the design phase began at an early stage.

The ride layout was designed to perfectly fit the designated area in the park. This large footprint allowed areas for enjoying the theming or experiencing the thrill, speed and splashing water. This attraction features a bespoke energy efficient hydraulic system, a turntable for a backwards drop and a 12-metre high Vertical Transport Unit for the final big chute.



## Empex Watertoys

**Empex Watertoys** has provided creative water playscapes to enhance landscape projects around the world since 1986.

The Toronto-based company manufactures creative interactive water toys and spray features for water playgrounds and water parks internationally at camp grounds, city parks, water parks, amusement parks, family entertainment centres, day camps, summer camps, golf courses and resorts.

With over 450 different water features and water structures with 20 different themes, Empex has provided water features to the Hilton, Westin, Marriott, Holiday Inn, Novotel hotels, Carnival, Royal Caribbean and MCS Cruise Lines, Warner Bros Park, Cedar Fair parks, Paramount parks, Six Flags and numerous city parks.

Ergonomically designed for safety, the products are non-metallic, providing low electrical and thermal conductivity; manufactured with special resistant and corrosion-free plastics for use in chlorinated water. Much lighter than metal, installing Empex features requires no elaborate foundations or built-in anchors. Completely surface mounted, the features are easily retrofitted to existing water supplies or changed to vary the splash park design from year to year.

Empex Watertoys was selected to design a splash park for Mundo Imayina, a theme park created for the Dr Sonrisas foundation, a non-profit organisation that supports thousands of children with resources, volunteers, or funds who have a health condition that puts their lives at risk. The Mundo Imáyina project was formed to create a unique concept where children with a chronic, advanced and/or terminal illness can immerse themselves in a world of fantasy and magic.

The splashpark project is one of many attractions in the park offering exciting play for the youngsters.



The Empex project was designed to provide water features that would accommodate children up to age 12. A central event included an Aquadek in the Aquatropica theme with various interactive water features and two large waterslides.

Surrounding the Aquadek several water toys and colourful play features were arranged with different heights and sprays for the younger children.

The project was challenging because the shipment had to go overland quite a distance from port to Tizapan, Alvaro Obregon, Mexico, and one truck was lost, so the park could not be fully assembled on time. Eventually the truck was found and the project completed.

The Splash park was completed in the autumn of 2022 and is now an amazing addition to Mundo Imayina offering exciting play and respite for children facing serious life challenges.





# Vortex Aquatic

**Founded in** 1995 in Montreal, Canada, Vortex International pioneered the Splashpad. This zero-depth solution puts the focus on play and safety, revolutionising the way children and families play in urban spaces, water parks, and resorts worldwide.

Vortex Aquatic, working with Bø Sommerland water park, Scandinavia's largest water park located in Telemark, Norway, unveiled its new aquatic play area, Kånn's Tiki. Spanning over 800 sq metres, the zero-depth Splashpad includes a custom Vortex Elevations, designed to provide a unique and engaging water park experience for families and young guests up to 10 years old.

The development of Kånn's Tiki was a collaborative effort between Parques Reunidos, a leading name in the amusement and leisure park industry, and the Vortex team.

Together, their expertise ensured that the Splashpad was seamlessly integrated into the park's environment, by strategically positioning it along a main pathway that connects the front entrance to the new area of Te Tonga where it is located to the back of the park.

The Splashpad is thoughtfully divided into distinct zones tailored to different age groups.

Central to Kånn's Tiki is a family area, which features the Vortex Elevations — an aquatic elevated structure that brings a new dimension of play. Here, a natural and marine theme captivates both adults and children with its vivid designs and colours.

The play area includes dynamic elements such as the iconic Twinsplash dumping bucket, Dolphin cannons and a Sailboat, enriching the interactive experience. A special section for toddlers offers ample space for individual games, promoting independence and motor skills development. Water elements designed for interaction help foster communication and social skills from a young age, with safety as a priority.

Parents can enjoy rest and dining areas, strategically placed so they can relax as their children play. The abundance of space is also designed to give a sense of freedom and prevent crowding. And the surrounding forest creates a pleasant climate, and shaded areas help to keep cool during heat waves.

A key feature of the installation is its sustainability; the Splashpad operates on a water recirculation system that conserves water through filtration, disinfection, and reuse, underscoring the park's commitment to environmental conservation.





# WhiteWater West



AquaForms 12, Island Waterpark at Showboat, Atlantic City, USA

**WhiteWater West** was formed in 1980 with one purpose, to create places where families unite and make joyful, lasting memories.

The team achieves this by standing alongside customers from concept to completion, from slides to water rides and everything in between.

Each design is evaluated using carefully calibrated simulations, followed by testing and fine-tuning to ensure the ride experience is optimal and safety is assured. Through their involvement with organisations such as ASTM International and IAAPA, WhiteWater West supports the standardisation of international guidelines that govern the development of attractions world-wide.

WhiteWater has helped develop water parks since the very start of the industry 40 years ago, their team of 600 employees have completed over 6,000 projects across theme parks, cruise ships, water parks (indoor and outdoor), and hotels and resorts all around the world.

With products designed to last, even in the most challenging environments, facing harsh elements such as wind, UV light, humidity, and chemicals. The quality of WhiteWater's engineering means their products stand up to the worst that nature throws at them—from hurricanes to earthquakes—producing a track record of smooth operating rides that stand the test of time. The company's SilkTek fibreglass technology, made with a resin transfer moulding process, ensures that slides stay shiny longer, colours brighter, and surfaces smoother.

Water parks have been the heart of WhiteWater's business since the beginning. With a team made up of people who have managed and operated water parks, worked for large design houses, invented the industry's first water play structure, and even cleaned pools at one



Whizzard, Epic Waters Indoor Waterpark, Grand Prairie, USA,

point in their careers, WhiteWater brings a variety of perspectives to the table.

This wealth of knowledge and experience shone through on the company's second project for the Center Parcs brand at The Aqua Mundo indoor water park in Domaine Les Landes de Gascogne, France.

The seventh location to open in France, this expansive 85-hectare Center Parcs site exclusively features WhiteWater water slides, including Europe's first Parallel Pursuit - designed for head-to-head racing with a low separating wall so that riders can see and hear each other—both on straightaways and turns, and in open and enclosed sections. Its highly configurable design allows for striking colour and effects patterns, tailored thrill levels, and the ability to fit even the tightest footprints. It also features an AquaPlay 750, the original multi-level interactive water play structure created by play experts – and all themed to fit the Center Parcs brand of green family leisure. The new resort anticipates around 300,000 yearly visitors, with approximately 500,000 overnight stays.



# Aquatic Development Group



Kalahari Sandusky Wave Pool

**What started** in the 1950s as a commercial pool contracting business has blossomed into a worldwide corporation that develops innovative products and revenue-generating design/build projects for water parks, resorts, surf parks, aquatic centres and recreational facilities worldwide.

ADG's vertical integration between planning, design, construction, and manufacturing is unique in the industry. It allows the team to build on their knowledge and experience, and apply those learnings as they develop plans to address a complete project — from scheduling and financing constraints, to design elements and building needs.

ADG notoriously completed work on a project for Wilderness Resorts – ownership group of Soaky Mountain water park. The company wanted to build a \$90m state-of-the-art, 50-acre outdoor 'modern-mountain' water park featuring the most cutting-edge attractions in the industry.

The Soaky Mountain team originally considered a Summer 2021 opening date, but the ADG team knew that they had the capability to get them open a season earlier. To do this, ADG took on the role of design/build and construction manager of the project, seeing the project through from concept through construction, meeting their budget, and beating their original timeframe.

There were several challenges that were faced and overcame throughout this project, starting with the site/geology. From the entry point to the furthest part of the water park, there was 100ft (ca. 30 m) of elevation change and the site was composed primarily of shale rock.

ADG's construction team had to blast and move 750,000 yards (ca. 686 km) of earth before work on the water park could even begin. A key objective in ADG's design was to preserve and showcase the unique elevation grade as much as possible, creating a unique modern-mountain landscape that allowed them to creatively

design the amenities and attractions into the elevation versus just flattening it out.

Throughout construction, there were 60-days of complete washout days, meaning construction crews were unable to use heavy machinery for two full months of project construction.

Overcoming unknown/unprecedented obstacles of constructing a water park during a worldwide pandemic was also an issue.

The water rides and attractions at Soaky Mountain feature the very latest in ride innovation across all ride categories. At 50-acres, it is the largest water park opening in the US in 2020.

A surprise around every turn, Soaky Mountain water park takes all the classic water park rides you think you know – and makes them better. Beyond the ride mix, the park also features a mountain modern design which truly sets this water park apart.

From the design and architecture and buildings to the multitude of unique F&B outlets located throughout the park, this modern flair, combined with a natural mountain vibe, was the perfect showcase for a water park situated only a few miles from the Smoky Mountains.

Some of the main highlighted attractions include a 35,000sqft wave pool capable of generating waves up to six feet high, and ADG's Tidal River Ride spanning over 24,000sqft with three Tidal Wave roller waves. Both attractions were designed by ADG and are powered by ADG's WaveTek wave systems.

ADG also designed/supplied a dual-Wibit inflatable water obstacle course, an adult cabana pool, and a double FlowRider. ProSlide developed an innovative slide package for Soaky Mountain water park that featured several industry-first slides that were suitable to be constructed into the topography of the property.



# AUDITS PROGRAMME LAUNCHED FOR PARK SAFETY INSPECTION BODIES

By Carl Hagemann, General Manager, ADIPS (Amusement Device Inspection Procedures Scheme)

**For all parks featured in InterPark, safety inspections are part and parcel of operations, and how these checks are conducted is critical.**

Over the coming months, a fresh programme of audits of ADIPS inspection bodies (IBs) will be carried out nationwide as part of our role in helping you to protect your visitors and teams working on the rides.

In a new partnership between ADIPS and Blackpool-based auditors RKMS, rigorous checks will be made to ensure IBs responsible for ensuring safety standards are maintained on amusement devices at theme parks, piers, outdoor events and fairgrounds across the UK are doing all the right things.

I know from talking to parks that safety remains a priority. ADIPS IBs play an essential role in this by ensuring your teams are practising good safety on site. It is part of our role to ensure the IBs themselves are asking the right questions.

Audits of inspection bodies are important for various reasons. Here are a few:

- Assurance of inspection quality - audits verify that our IBs are following approved standards and procedures. This ensures the inspections are reliable and accurate.
- Confidence in certification - when an operator is certified by a properly audited inspection body, it instills confidence in regulators, investors, and visitors.
- Identifying weaknesses - a good audit will uncover areas where the IB needs to improve their processes, training or documentation.
- Benchmarking against best practices - the audit process often involves comparing the IB's practices against established standards and guidelines. This helps identify areas for improvement and learn from best practices.
- Level playing field - by verifying that all inspection bodies stick to the same rules, audits promote fairness and a level playing field for parks seeking certification.

Audits of ADIPS IBs are vital in maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of the inspection and certification system in our industry. They ensure inspections are reliable, promote continuous improvement within the IBs themselves, and ultimately contribute to public trust and safety.

So, what can ADIPS IBs expect over the next year? Assurance must work both ways, in my view - ADIPS

needs to be confident that you are upholding safety standards as operators, but equally you need to be assured that the IBs carrying out the inspections are doing their jobs properly.

So, I can share that when RKMS is assessing the quality management systems of IBs, they will be comparing the content against the requirements of ISO 17020, which is more involved than ISO 9001, as it has some additional requirements around competence and impartiality.

With witnessed inspections, RKMS will be observing inspectors undertaking inspections of your rides to the requirements of the ADIPS Scheme Document, HSG 175 and other statutory, regulatory and legislative requirements which are applicable, such as:

- ADIPS "Scheme Document for the inspection and Certification of amusement devices"
- HSE guidance HSG 175 "Fairgrounds and amusement parks - Guidance on safe practice"
- Pressure Systems Safety Regulations 2000 (PSSR)
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015)
- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER)
- The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
- The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989

Among main issues found by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in their recent inspections were damaged/poor electrical installation housing, missing grommets, open to water ingress and human contact and live exposed cabling/switch gear. We talk regularly with HSE to ensure our IBs are aware of the problems discovered by the regulator when its inspectors carry out checks.

RKMS CEO John Keen said: "We are not looking to find faults during an audit; we're looking for objective evidence of compliance to the standard, code of practice and / or legislative or regulatory requirements.

"If we do find something, we'll raise it at the time and allow the IB to produce additional information prior to the closing meeting. We aim for our reports to provide IBs with information that enable them to continually improve. Our process is open, honest and transparent. We like to think of this as a partnership."

For more information about ADIPS, please visit our website - [adips.co.uk](http://adips.co.uk)





## **LAURENCE BECKERS, CREATIVE DIRECTOR**

Editor Beth Whitaker speaks with Laurence Beckers about her career in the industry and what it takes to remain relevant, innovative and fresh.





### TELL ME WHAT ALTERFACE IS ALL ABOUT AND WHAT THE COMPANY STANDS FOR?

Founded in 2001 and headquartered in Belgium, Alterface has allowed me to evolve and flourish in this unique convergence of art, science, and technology. In essence, we have grown and evolved together, from the world of museums to the first group attractions in theme parks, from linear movies to real-time use, from two to three dimensions...

Alterface is now a leading manufacturer of media-based and interactive attractions across the world. The company is specialised in crafting tailor made interactive experiences and in developing the most advanced technologies to produce intuitive ways for people to interact with their environment seamlessly.

What I appreciate the most is that year after year, Alterface maintains this freshness, a taste for innovation, self-improvement, and perfection. By remaining a small structure, I believe that Alterface has preserved its flexibility and its speed of evolution and adaptation.

From conceptual design to proof of concept, together with clients or partners, we create the perfect interactive experience. Perhaps this is another charming aspect of the attraction industry: working as a team, building these attractions together, driven by the same motivation to offer the best memorable moments to families. Using interactive technologies always means prioritising the visitor experience, placing them at the centre of our focus.

### WHEN DID YOU START WORKING IN THE PARKS AND ATTRACTIONS INDUSTRY AND ANY WEIRD AND WONDERFUL SITUATIONS THAT COME TO MIND?

I began my career in the attraction industry 20 years ago. I started as a graphic and motion designer. I remember a shooting sequence at the very beginning of Alterface, totally improvised because the client was asking us to shoot a famous local journalist and integrate him into our video. There were three of us

in a broom cupboard that we had previously emptied. Our software engineer was sitting on the floor with the microphone in his hand, adjusting the saturation and audio levels. I taped sheets of blue cardboard to the wall behind the journalist to simulate a bluekey background. I was recording images and simultaneously turning the pages with the text for the speakers to read. I used my make-up to hide a hematoma on the journalist's forehead, as he had hit his head when entering the cramped space where we were shooting the sequence.

Also, playing didgeridoo in an Interactive Dome when working by night in an empty museum.

Or applying my own red varnish to a zombie wolf's broken snout because the door to the poorly tuned special effects closed just as he was coming out of the trapdoor. How fun!

There are then, all those wonderful moments when you complete a project and observe the real end-users - the visitors and families - and you anxiously wait to see their happy faces, wondering if they understand everything, if they like it. I can't describe the pleasure and satisfaction that you feel when you see kids coming out of your attraction, only to come running back for more.. It's an incredible feeling.







### **WHAT LED YOU TO A CAREER IN THE PARKS AND ATTRACTIONS INDUSTRY?**

I studied Biology and Graphic Arts, which led me to work on projects for museums and science centres. Alterface's initial projects were also in this field, providing a perfect match for my skills. When Alterface started working in the attractions industry, I naturally transitioned with them.

### **WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME CAREER HIGHLIGHTS?**

I'd rather talk about projects than myself. So... one word to sum up... What about curiosity?

Curiosity about others, when it comes to understanding the customer, the visitors, the request?  
Curiosity to understanding the cultural difference, curiosity to grasp a new technology, a new challenge, a new story to tell, a new function in the company?

### **DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE PROJECT?**

I would say Maus au chocolat is a favourite project of mine. It was a fabulous collaboration with designer Eric Daman. We were perfectly aligned in our vision of the media content and scenography. What a pleasure it is when you work closely with the designer from a park and there is an instant connection and shared vision for the aesthetic, the style, the direction you want the ride to have.

### **WHAT SIGNIFICANT CHANGES HAVE YOU SEEN IN YOUR SECTOR?**

There's a kind of dazzlement. I've seen the emergence of some new technologies, the detection of people and their movements, the improvement of real time, the ability to personalise experiences. The evolution of robotics, the AI boom, all this seems to be converging towards a huge potential whose contours I'm not even sure I can define.

### **WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT WORKING WITHIN THE PARKS AND ATTRACTIONS INDUSTRY?**

All the tools and incredible means that you can use to tell a story, to immerse the kids in a fabulous adventure, to evoke powerful emotions in our guests.



Also, the collaboration and relationships that we build with others when working on projects.

### **WHAT DO YOU MOST ADMIRE ABOUT THIS INDUSTRY?**

The use of cutting-edge technology blended with creativity. It offers a unique blend of creativity, excitement, and challenge.

### **WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR ALTERFACE?**

Keep this balance between art, science and technology. It is the golden triangle.

### **IF YOU WEREN'T WORKING IN THE PARKS AND AMUSEMENTS SECTOR, WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING?**

Art projects with social or ecological impacts, run a cultural venue to host exhibitions and shows, develop artistic projects, both my own and those of others, initiate collaborative projects... I would need a position where I would have interactions with others.

### **WHAT'S THE ONE THING PEOPLE MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT YOU?**

That I'm already doing all of this alongside my fulfilling role at Alterface.





# Cadbury Chocolate Quest | Cadbury World

By David Whitworth

It promises to be a sweet year for Cadbury World in the UK thanks to its new interactive dark ride Cadbury Chocolate Quest.

The Birmingham attraction is a trackless indoor ride that is suitable for all the family; £8m has been invested by Merlin Entertainment, which designed Cadbury Chocolate Quest and oversees Cadbury World.

An immersive ride heavily themed by chocolate designs, Cadbury Chocolate Quest will take guests on “a choc-tastic mission by the iconic Cadbury character Freddo before they jump aboard a Cadbury car and complete an immersive and entertaining quest to collect all the delicious ingredients needed to make a bar of Cadbury Dairy Milk.”

Riders will use lasers to zap up ingredients such as cocoa beans and follow the scent of chocolate. Once their chocolatey quest comes to an end, guests will disembark the ride and collect a Cadbury treat made with all the ingredients they have collected.

Cadbury Chocolate Quest will harness a combination of 3D sets and virtual screens to bring the ride to life added to sounds, lights, smells and heat, making for an interactive and sensory experience. Cadbury Chocolate Quest has replaced the attraction’s current ride, Cadabra, which has closed after 27 years. A popular ride, Cadabra has welcomed more than 14 million guests since its creation.

Cadbury World has grown exponentially since Merlin Entertainments took over the venue in January 2023, thanks to the appointment of experts in guest experience, injecting financial investment to aid its growth and improve its selection of attractions. InterPark spoke with Tim Waters, Regional Director, Merlin Entertainments to discover more about its latest attraction.

## WHAT CAN GUESTS EXPECT ONBOARD CADBURY CHOCOLATE QUEST?

“Cadbury Chocolate Quest sees guests set a choc-tastic mission by the iconic Cadbury character, Freddo, before they jump aboard a Cadbury car and complete an immersive and entertaining quest to collect all the delicious ingredients needed to make a bar of Cadbury Dairy Milk, using laser inspired “Cadbury Collectors” to zap them up.

“The new ride will be an opportunity for parents to take their children through a whole new chocolatey experience, with even more fun along the way! The motivation and inspiration behind the new ride comes with larger ambitions for the future of Cadbury World, and we are excited for our guests to enjoy what’s in store at our attraction this year.”





#### TELL US ABOUT THE TECHNOLOGICAL FEATURES OF THE RIDE

"Using a combination of 3D sets and virtual screens, the ride is brought to life with sounds, lights, smells and heat, making it a truly interactive and sensory experience. As they embark on their quest, guests are first met with the iconic glass-and-a-half 3D floor-to-ceiling flowing milk glasses, before heading into a heated cocoa bean rainforest to interact with the screens and lights and zap up cocoa pods. Next, guests are led into an English countryside scene with all the smells of meadows and fresh grass, before jumping aboard the Cadbury train, splashed with a water surprise, and taken to the Bournville factory to virtually create their bar of Cadbury Dairy Milk. It's a multi-sensory, fully interactive experience that the entire family will love."

#### HOW LONG HAS THIS RIDE BEEN IN THE PIPELINE?

"It's been almost an 18-month-long process of development, which started with the Merlin Magic Making team's original concepts. Then we collaborated with multiple experts in the field, such as ride engineers, audiovisual creators, scriptwriters, and architects to ensure what started as a paper drawing became an immersive and interactive reality."

#### WHAT IS THE LEGACY OF CADABRA?

"Cadabra first opened its car-doors in 1997. Since then, more than 14 million guests have experienced it including famous faces such as The Princess Royal, Adele and Gwyneth Paltrow. As visitors of Cadbury World will know, an iconic feature of the ride is the village of smiling cocoa bean characters – known as Chuckle

Beans – who playfully guided guests on a magical journey through their world, or 'Beanville.'

"We understand our much-loved Cadabra ride brought so much nostalgia and is a fond memory for many people who have visited Cadbury World over the years. The Chuckle Bean characters that featured throughout Cadabra are unique, and that's why we have offered fans of the ride a chance to become the new caretakers of our beloved beans. Whilst Cadabra will be missed, we are delighted to see our guests' new love for our amazing Cadbury Chocolate Quest ride emerge."

*InterPark also canvassed opinion from Laurence Beckers, Creative Director of Alterface to discuss its involvement in Cadbury Chocolate Quest, powered by the company's interactivity and show control technology.*

#### WHAT HAS ALTERFACE'S ROLE IN THIS NEW ATTRACTION INVOLVED?

"This ride was a collaborative effort with Merlin Entertainments, with whom we have a longstanding partnership. Together, we've worked on 28 interactive dark rides for the Lego Discovery centres worldwide, with one more coming soon in Hamburg, Germany. Furthermore, on the same day as the opening at Cadbury World, we launched another collaborative ride with Merlin, the Demon's Crypt at Heide Park."

"We collaborated with Theodore Papadopoulos, Art Director of Merlin Entertainments, on his design concept, overcoming constraints such as time, space, and gameplay. Our standout asset, setting us apart from competitors, is our ability to create experiences from a gameplay and interactivity standpoint. Show Producer Benjamin Walravens, who played a pivotal



role in the project, closely collaborated with Theodore to ensure that every aspect of the ride adhered to gameplay and interactivity standards, showcasing our expertise in this area.

"We assumed full project management responsibilities, overseeing every aspect from inception to completion. Additionally, we coordinated and subcontracted suppliers for media, lighting, audio, and the ride system. In terms of the ride system, Alterface took care of all decisions concerning the ride system:

We provided the track design: integrating the project into the size, the capacity and the management of the wheelchair vehicle (which required meticulous consideration for the overall flow and guest experience). We chose the vehicle's vendor (ETF) and the vehicle model (trackless multimover) which best met the ride's requirements. Thanks to this state-of-the-art ride system, Cadbury Chocolate World promises to be a beloved destination for Cadbury chocolate fans.

#### HOW LONG DID THE PROJECT TAKE?

"From our standpoint, it was a 15-month project from its inception to bring it to fruition."

#### HOW DID YOU STAY FAITHFUL TO THE CADBURY BRAND?

"Working with Cadbury and staying faithful to the brand during the development of the ride was an enriching experience. We were dedicated to not only meeting Merlin's requests but also ensuring that the essence of Cadbury's brand identity was upheld throughout the process.

"Theodore Papadopoulos, the Art Director from Merlin Entertainment, played a pivotal role in maintaining this connection with the Cadbury brand.



He meticulously handled all the details to ensure alignment with Cadbury's guidelines and the spirit of Cadbury Chocolate. Cadbury's brand messaging and marketing strength provided valuable guidance that influenced various aspects of the ride, including the game's objectives, dialogues, and theming. Overall, our collaboration with Cadbury was characterised by a deep respect for its brand legacy and a commitment to delivering an experience that resonates with its audience while staying true to its values and image.

#### HOW WAS IT WORKING ALONGSIDE THEODORE PAPADOPOULOS?

Theodore's creativity and easy-going nature made collaborating with him a pleasure. Despite his friendly and approachable personality, Theodore also possesses a strong vision for the ride and he is an exceptional Art Director.

In addition to Cadbury Chocolate Quest, Cadbury World has invested heavily in enhancing its current attractions with the interactive Have a Go Zone, a revamped Bournville Experience and an upgraded Advertising Avenue. Guests can also experience the 4D Chocolate Adventure cinema and chocolate making demonstrations among its chocolate-themed attractions.

And its centrepiece ride of Cadbury Chocolate Quest will encapsulate its riders thanks to marrying together compelling storytelling, impressive chocolate theming and sophisticated use of technology.





Merger map (source Cedar Fair and Six Flags)

# INVESTMENT COMMUNITY CONCERNS

By: Dennis Speigel

I am constantly called upon by the global leisure investment community to discuss how major operators around the globe are performing, as well as what is currently trending in the leisure industry. These topics range from attendance, per capita spending, season passes, wages, labor shortages, potential mergers, pricing programmes, the status of dynamic pricing, capital expenditure impacts short-term / long-term, plus many more questions concerned with which major operators are better positioned to succeed in 2024.

As we enter the 2024 operating season, I thought it would be interesting to share with you some of the questions I have received during the last two weeks and my responses.

Several inquiries revolve around the hot topic of Q1 2024 season pass sales. This question applies to both destination and regional park pass sales. Our ground intelligence and conversations with operators indicate that season passes are getting off to a good start in 2024, ahead of the same period last year. I have explained to investors that season pass sales have become a most important attendance by ticket type segment in the USA regional parks with the two largest operators, Cedar Fair and Six Flags, totaling over 57% of their annual attendance by season pass holders. From the destination parks standpoint, season pass sales have started strong; however, Disney, which typically sells out its Magic Key pass segments during the first several days of offering, recently reported that their higher tier Magic Key passes have not immediately sold out. This indicates to me that there is definitely price sensitivity among season pass holders which I believe will carry over to other ticket sale segments.

Weather is another question that keeps coming up with investors wondering how weather has impacted Q1 thus far and what parks are doing to better manage weather issues. I have indicated that weather has become a much more relevant factor during the last seven years and that parks are taking serious steps to manage weather issues through advanced technology and providing for weather conditions on a budget line-item basis in their annual budgeting. We are finding this holds true for operators in Europe as well as the USA. Admission pricing consumes a lot of their attention, with inquiries concerning the status and implementation of dynamic pricing throughout the industry. They have also inquired about surge pricing for special attractions and events, in addition to how and if dynamic pricing can be instituted internally in a park operation to have a positive impact on a park's food and beverage and retail operations, thus maximising profits. It has been explained that dynamic pricing is slowly being adopted and implemented by many parks in the USA and in Europe. We have indicated it will be several years before true and transparent dynamic pricing becomes fundamental to our industry.

High wages and labour shortages are also being questioned by the investment community to better understand what their impact will be on general operations and parks' profit and loss statements. It has been explained that, for decades, labour approximated typically 50% of a park's operating expense. That figure has now risen above 63% of total operating costs. I have communicated that these significant issues will remain with us and that operating facilities of all sizes are taking different measures to adjust their operating schedules, including number of operating days and hours.





Operator concerns (itps source)

Interest has also been shown in questioning the impact that Universal's Epic Universe will have on the Orlando attractions business when it opens in 2025. Based on the capital expenditure, the park's size and scope, technology, and the overall quality of Epic Universe, I have indicated that I believe attendance during their first year will hit and exceed 5 million, and that the opening of this park will have minor attendance impact on Disney and possibly more significant impact on SeaWorld.

There is high interest in understanding capital expenditures in the short term. I have indicated that most operators here and in Europe have been increasing their capital expenditures for 2024 and the next several years. The reasoning behind this is that operators continue to see capex driving higher attendance both on and off site, particularly when hotels and other ancillary support facilities, such as retail and dining, are also being added.

Questions have arisen about the competition between Disney and Universal, particularly in the USA, with interest focusing on Universal's expansions in Frisco, Texas and Las Vegas, Nevada.

The other major topic on investors' minds here in America is the status of completion of the merger of Cedar Fair and Six Flags, what properties, if any, will be shed, where the headquarters will be located, and who will be responsible for operating the parks. Assuming the merger is completed, I believe there will be several properties shed, from the West Coast through the Midwest, and to the East coast. Not many, but a few. In my opinion, the headquarters will be located in Charlotte, North Carolina, where Cedar Fair is located; and Cedar Fair will have operating responsibility for all of the newly merged facilities.

These are just a few of the questions that I receive weekly. We do not have the space to go into all of them, but should you have any interest in learning more, feel free to contact me.

#### About ITPS

#### ITPS....."WHERE FUN IS A SERIOUS BUSINESS,"

is globally the leisure industry's leading independent, full-service consulting firm. Founded by Dennis Spiegel in 1983 and located in Cincinnati, Ohio, USA, ITPS is uniquely qualified to assist in all aspects of leisure project development and has worked on over 500 projects and in over 55 countries since its inception. Always on the forefront of new trends, ITPS is experienced to assist in all aspects of any new project or existing facility. They can be reached at [itps@interthemepark.com](mailto:itps@interthemepark.com). ITPS is celebrating 41 years of service to the amusement industry in 2024.



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513-381-6131

2200 Victory Parkway  
Suite 500A

Cincinnati, Ohio 45206  
USA





# CALENDAR

## May 7 - 9. 2024

**Saudi Entertainment & Amusement Expo,**  
Riyadh Front Exhibition & Convention &  
Centre, Riyadh, SAUDI ARABIA  
Contact: DMG Events  
Tel: +971 448 0355  
Email: info@dmgevents.com  
www.saudientertainmentexpo.com

## May 10 - 12 2024

**2024 ASIA AMUSEMENT & ATTRACTIONS EXPO,**  
China Import & Export Fair Complex,  
Guangzhou, CHINA  
Contact: Tina Chang  
Email: sales@grandeurhk.com  
Website: aaaexpos.com

## May 28 - 30

**IAAPA Expo Asia 2024,**  
Queen Sirikit National Convention  
Center, Bangkok, THAILAND  
Contact: International Association of  
Amusement Parks & Attractions, 4155  
West Taft Vineland Road, Orlando,  
Florida, USA  
Tel: +1 321 319 7600  
Fax: +1 321 319 7690  
Email: iaapa@IAAPA.org  
www.iaapa.org/expos/iaapa-expo-asia

## July 3 - 5

**LIVE!NT, Events & Amusement Expo Tokyo,**  
Tokyo Big Sight, Tokyo, JAPAN  
Contact: Rx Japan Ltd.  
Tel: +813 3349 8510  
Email: live-expo.eng.jp@rxglobal.com  
www.livent-expo.jp/hub/en-gb/exhibit/  
event.html

## July 18 - 20

**Philippine Attraction & Amusement Expo**  
2024, World Trade Centre Metro Manila,  
PHILIPPINES  
Contact: HQ Bizlink International Pte Ltd,  
Email: mail@hqbizlinkintl.com  
www.pa-expo.net



## August 28 - 29

**Theme Park - Water Park Expo Vietnam**  
2024, Tan Son Nhat Pavilion Convention  
Center, Ho Chi Minh City, VIETNAM  
Contact: Fireworks Trade Media Co.,  
Ltd. 18th floor, Indochina Park Tower  
4, Nguyen Dinh Chieu, Da Kao Ward,  
District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, VIETNAM  
Tel: +84 28 6654 9268  
Email: viet@fireworksviet.com  
www.themeparkvietnam.com

## September 3 - 5

**Thailand Amusement & Attraction Parks Expo**  
(TAAPE),  
Impact Exhibition Centre, Bangkok,  
THAILAND  
Contact: Guangdong Grandeur  
International Exhibition Group, 7/F, Block  
C, Poly World Trade Centre, No. 1000  
Xingangdong Road, Haizhu District,  
Guangzhou, China  
Tel: 13104892856  
Email: Sales@grandeurhk.com  
Website: www.taapeexpo.com

## September 24 - 26

**IAAPA Expo Europe,**  
Amsterdam, NETHERLANDS  
Contact: International Association of  
Amusement Parks & Attractions, 4155  
West Taft Vineland Road, Orlando,  
Florida, USA  
Tel: +1 321 319 7600  
Fax: +1 321 319 7690  
Email: iaapa@IAAPA.org  
www.iaapa.org/expos/iaapa-expo-europe



## October 16 - 18

**Leisure Japan 2024,**  
Tokyo Big Sight - South Hall, Tokyo,  
JAPAN  
Contact: TSO International Inc.  
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Email: info@leisure-japan.jp  
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ETF .....	21
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Gosetto .....	21
Great Coasters International....	15
IAAPA Expo Asia .....	IBC
Mack Rides .....	IFC + 5
RDC .....	11
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**Editor:** Beth Whitaker  
Email: editor@interpark.co.uk

**News Editor:** David Whitworth  
Email: news@interpark.co.uk

**Features:** Emma Bilardi  
Email: features@interpark.co.uk

**Contributing Columnist:**  
Dennis Speigel

**Publisher & Advertising Sales:**  
John Fosbrooke  
Email: john@interpark.co.uk

**Asian Sales & subscriptions:**  
Lily Zhang  
Email: lily@interpark.co.uk

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information**  
Tel: +44 161 6100022  
Email: admin@interpark.co.uk  
Website: www.interpark.co.uk

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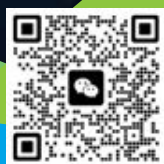


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